

### Trust God's Promises

**<sup>54</sup> When Solomon had finished all these prayers and supplications to the LORD, he rose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had been kneeling with his hands spread out toward heaven. <sup>55</sup> He stood and blessed the whole assembly of Israel in a loud voice, saying: <sup>56</sup> "Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses. <sup>57</sup> May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our fathers; may he never leave us nor forsake us. <sup>58</sup> May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep the commands, decrees and regulations he gave our fathers. <sup>59</sup> And may these words of mine, which I have prayed before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, that he may uphold the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel according to each day's need, <sup>60</sup> so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God and that there is no other. <sup>61</sup> But your hearts must be fully committed to the LORD our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time."**

We build our lives on promises from people here on earth. Assurances from doctors who treat us, airline pilots who fly us, pledges from presidential hopefuls who will lead us, promises on the contracts we sign for our jobs, the warranty service on the new LCD television we purchased on Black Friday; as spouses we build our lives on the promises we made in marriage. How much more that we build our Christian lives on God's promises?

The entire nation of Israel built their lives on the promises of the LORD. This morning in our lesson from 1Kings 8, the nation of Israel is celebrating the dedication of their new worship facility. Their king, King Solomon, stands before the altar of the LORD. Thousands of Jews pack the temple courtyards, standing room only, and many more spill out into the streets and alleys leading up to the temple. And the king prays, **"Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses."** (vs56) The rest God had promised goes back 450 years. Commander Joshua was leading the people of Israel, some 2million strong, into the land of Canaan. The LORD promised Joshua that he would send his angel ahead of the army, and no one would stand in their way. At the end of chapter 21 of the book of Joshua the Holy Spirit informs us that the LORD had given rest to his people Israel just as he promised (21:44,45). All the tribes occupied territories, as the LORD promised. And now, in Solomon's time, the nation was still at peace. Solomon's father, King David, a true soldier, by his sword had established peace with the neighboring nations. And now the temple was complete. God kept his promises.

The temple was the culmination of God's Old Testament plans. The temple worship was

a constant reminder that God had fulfilled his promises that he had made in the past and pointed the people ahead to the future, and see that the LORD would fulfill his next promise in the Messiah. The people would see the High Priest and know that a Great High Priest would bring a sacrifice, himself, and offer it for their sins. The people would hear the prophets and know that the Prophet would one day come and proclaim good news, good news of peace with God.

The problem was the people of Israel failed to look back at the promises fulfilled to strengthen them as they marched into the future. They stopped building their lives on God's promises and instead built their lives on themselves and the false gods of their heathen neighbors. They forgot God's promises and no longer honored the promises they themselves made to the LORD. After Solomon died his kingdom was split in two. Two of Solomon's sons took over two nations. 300 years later (722BC) the Northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians. 150 after that (586BC), the Southern Kingdom was destroyed by the Babylonians. There was no peace. There was no rest for God's people because they forgot God's promises.

When we look back on our lives, it's easy to remember the promises of others who failed us; the doctor's prognosis was not completely accurate, the warranty not as good as proposed, the airline pilot did not get us to the terminal in time. We become discouraged. We look to other promises that might be kept. The world offers all sorts of guarantees. Take this pill to feel better. Drown your sorrows in this bottle. Amass wealth and possessions. We find no rest but more anxieties and problems.

As Christians, we would think that we would look back on our life's history and see the promises God has made and kept for us, and especially now as we look forward with our stewardship campaign, *Faith Builds the Future*. God establishes principles in Scripture for managing our time, money and skills. He tells us to put him first, to give him a generous portion of our firstfruits. He promises to give us all we need. So when we pray, "Give us today our daily bread," our LORD responds, "I will!" And he does! He provides us clothing, food and shelter, everything that we need to live. The LORD tells us, "Trust me!" But we don't. Too often we find ourselves worrying about money, about our food and clothes. We get so anxious about our "stuff." The bottom line is, when we fail to trust God's promises, that's unbelief! When we worry we do not believe that God is going to do what he says he's going to do and so we make him out to be a liar. When we dwell on the fact that we are all guilty of the sin of worrying, there is no rest for our conscience.

Thankfully, as we look back over our shoulders we see a past studded with God's earthly and spiritual blessings. Just as Israel could look back on their past and glorify the LORD by singing with their King Solomon, "**Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel, just as he promised.**" 1000 years after Solomon's temple was built, true rest was fully realized in the Messiah. The Messiah promised of old appeared at the temple, to take away sacrifices once and for all, by his one sacrifice for all people.

The world offers the people of the world rest with a sleep number bed from Select

Comfort. True rest can be found by popping a couple of Ambien. That's not true rest. After watching the news about the night of terror in India, I'm sure that some folks would wish for someone to sweep in and wipe out the bad guys and bring peace and rest. Jesus swept in from heaven and destroyed our enemies, not with a 120mm round from an Abrams M1-A2 tank. But Jesus destroyed our enemies (sin, Satan and death) with gentleness and humility. He lives a life totally dependant on his Father. That is, he fully trusted all of his Father's promises. The Father promised that this God-Man, Jesus Christ, was the one he himself had selected to carry out his plan of salvation. His Son would be the one who would suffer, die and rise again. There's got to be a whole lot of trust in that promise, "You're going to die, but you will rise again." So the Son of God willing went to his death, to destroy your sins and my sins of failing to trust God's promises, for not believing God's pledges to us. Here in the Lord's Supper he offers you the same body and blood to reassure you that your sins are forgiven. You will leave the altar this morning happy and with a guilty conscience at rest with the Father.

Jesus provides rest for your soul here on earth and for eternity. He promises it. Do you remember when Jesus was describing the last day for his disciples? (Matt 24) The Son of Man will come on the clouds with his angels and the trumpet call of God, and all the dead will be raised, the believers will go to eternal life. That's the promise Jesus makes to you. He guarantees his promise to you personally through your baptism. He promises, "**He who believes and is baptized will be saved.**" (Mk 16:16) And so, when you face death, you will trust this promise, that you will be in heaven with your Savior and all the other saints who were baptized and believed Jesus' promise of salvation.

Your LORD has promised to give you eternal rest. You trust that promise. You will trust his other promises. That is why the prayer of Solomon is good for us today too, isn't it, "May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our fathers; may he never leave us nor forsake us." Your LORD and Savior will never leave you nor forsake. We heard that already in the Gospel this morning from Matthew 6:25-34. Jesus tells us not to worry about life, what you will eat or drink, what you will wear. Your heavenly Father knows you need them. But instead of being self-centered and looking to your own interests and needs first, seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things (food, clothing, shelter) will be given to you as well. Isn't that what we're doing with our stewardship campaign *Faith Builds the Future*? We are putting God's kingdom first by putting forth the best and first of our gifts for the ministry of the gospel at Faith Lutheran church. God promises that when we, as Christians, venture for Him and His Kingdom, great things will happen.

If you have time this week, read the book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah got to go home to Jerusalem from Persia after the 70 year captivity of the Jews. Nehemiah's goal was to rebuild the walls of the city. What a huge building project compared to ours! The LORD stood by Nehemiah and the exiles who returned. They accomplished their goal in 52 days. In 52 days the people reconstructed the walls of the city of Jerusalem. Great things will happen when we trust God to do what he promises to do.

Listen to other promises of God, "**Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will**

**find...**” (Matt 7:7,8) Last week we heard from the prophet Malachi, “**Test and me in this (your act of giving offerings) and see if I don’t throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing you won’t have room enough for it.**” In 2Corinthians the apostle Paul says, “**Whatsoever a man sows is what he will reap. If he sows generously, he will reap generously.**” In Matthew 6 Jesus tells us to **lay up treasures for yourself in heaven.** Wouldn’t that also be giving to the ministry of Faith Lutheran through time spent in Bible study and worship? The treasures you lay up for yourselves are an increase of knowledge and faith in Jesus Christ. He promises it! Wouldn’t laying up treasures in heaven also be giving to the ministry of Faith Lutheran through our offerings of money and talents? We are investing in the future with our stewardship program and the new church building. We are building a new facility so that future generations have a place to listen to God’s promises from Scripture and be reminded to look back and say, “This is what the LORD did for the saints at Faith Lutheran.”

My dear friends, as we continue planning the building of our new facility, as we move forward with our stewardship campaign, let’s build on God’s promises. Trust him to do what he says he will do. Trust God’s promises! Amen.

